

Appln No. 10/814,926
Amdt date June 7, 2006
Reply to Office action of February 23, 2006

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-34 (Cancelled)

35. (New) An implant for the treatment of bone fractures, the implant comprising a main plate adapted to be fixed to a bone and a plate-shaped outrigger element adapted to be fixed to the bone, the plate-shaped outrigger element being offset from the main plate, the implant further comprising a flexible connection element, wherein the flexible connection element connects the main plate and the outrigger element to treat a bone fracture.

36. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the connection element has an elongate shape.

37. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the connection element is a wire or a thread.

38. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the connection element is coupled to the main plate and/or to the outrigger by tying, hooking and/or latching.

39. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the outrigger is made in one piece with the connection element.

40. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the outrigger has a plurality of passages for the reception of fastening elements.

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41. (New) The implant of claim 40, wherein the passages are adapted to receive bone screws.

42. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the outrigger is provided with at least five passages to receive fastening elements.

43. (New) The implant as claimed in claim 35, the implant comprising two wire-shaped connection elements and the main plate comprising two passages adapted and configured to lead the connection elements therethrough.

44. (New) The implant of claim 43, the connection elements being attached to the outrigger element and being led through the main plate passages and the connection elements being connected to each other at free ends remote from the outrigger element.

45. (New) The implant of claim 44, wherein the free ends are knotted or twisted together.

46. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the outrigger is flexible.

47. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 34, wherein the outrigger is formed as a perforated plate.

48. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 34, wherein the outrigger is made in mesh-like or grid-like shape.

49. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 34, wherein the outrigger includes a plurality of ring sections connected to one another directly or by webs and each bounding a passage.

50. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the outrigger and the connection element are unreleasably connected to one another.

51. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the outrigger in particular has eyelet-like or ring-like fastening sections for the coupling to the connection element.

52. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the spatial offset between the main plate and the outrigger can be individually set by the connection element.

53. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the connection element can be fixed at different positions to the main plate and/or to the outrigger.

54. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the main plate has at least one passage through which the connection element is guidable.

55. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 54, wherein the passage extends substantially parallel to the plane defined by the main plate.

56. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 34, wherein the main plate and/or the outrigger have at least one hook-like or claw-like continuation.

57. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the outrigger is made in plate shape and has smaller thickness than the main plate.

58. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 57, wherein the thickness of the outrigger is less than half the thickness of the main plate.

59. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the outrigger is sufficiently soft to be deformable without tools during an operation.

60. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the outrigger has a smaller base area than the main plate.

61. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 35, wherein the outrigger includes a bioabsorbable material, in particular a polymer.

62. (New) An implant in accordance with claim 61, wherein the bioabsorbable material is plastically deformable at temperatures between 50 and 90°C.

63. (New) An implant system for the treatment of bone fractures, the implant system comprising at least one main plate element adapted to be fixed to a bone and at least one plate-shaped outrigger element adapted to be fixed to the bone, the at least one outrigger element being arranged offset from the at least one main plate, the implant system further comprising a plurality of flexible connection elements,

wherein the flexible connection elements are adapted to connect the at least one main plate and the at least one outrigger element to treat a bone fracture;

wherein the flexible connection elements are prefabricated ready for use; and

wherein each flexible connection element differs with respect to shape, size or length.

64. (New) An implant system in accordance with claim 63, wherein at least one of the flexible connection elements has a U shape;

wherein at least one respective pair of passages, in particular provided in the form of bores, is made for a flexible connection element both in the at least one outrigger and in the at least one main plate; and

wherein a spacing between the at least one outrigger and the at least one main plate corresponds to that of the U limbs of the respective flexible connection element.